



Montana Early Care and Education
Career Development

MONTANA EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION KNOWLEDGE BASE

*A guide to early care and education professional practice:
What early childhood practitioners who work with young children and
families need to know, understand, and be able to do*

January 2008



Knowledge Base Content Areas

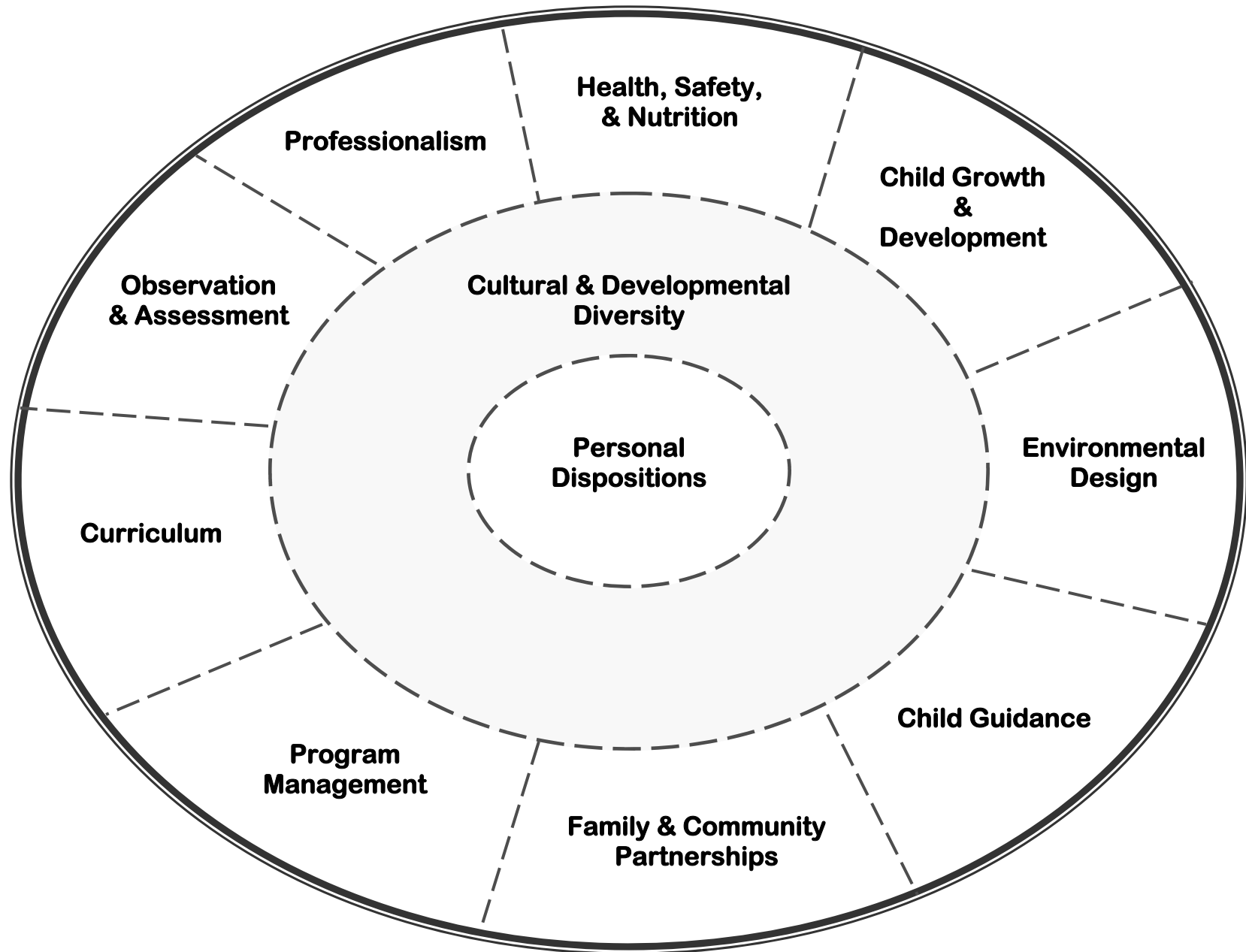


Table of Contents

Introduction

Assumptions.....	2
How the Use the Knowledge Base	3

Knowledge Base Content Areas

Personal Dispositions.....	4
Health, Safety, and Nutrition.....	7
Child Growth and Development.....	12
Environmental Design.....	16
Child Guidance.....	19
Family and Community Partnerships.....	23
Program Management.....	26
Curriculum.....	30
<i>Language and Literacy</i>	33
<i>Science</i>	34
<i>Mathematics</i>	36
<i>The Arts</i>	41
<i>Social Studies</i>	45
<i>Physical Development and Health Enhancement</i>	46
Observation and Assessment.....	48
Professionalism.....	51

Code of Ethical Conduct.....	55
-------------------------------------	-----------

Appendix: Individualized Early Childhood Professional Development Plan.....	58
--	-----------

Supplemental Resources.....	64
------------------------------------	-----------

Acknowledgements.....	66
------------------------------	-----------

Introduction

The Montana Early Care and Education Knowledge Base was first published in July 1998 as the foundation from which to build the state's comprehensive early childhood career development program. At that time, the Career Development Advisory Board made a commitment to revisiting the document and revising it every five years. In December 2004 it was completely updated with major revisions recommended by the Early Childhood Higher Education Consortium, Career Development Advisory Board, and many dedicated teachers, directors, caregivers, trainers and others across the state working in diverse settings. In January 2008, this Knowledge Base was reprinted with specific criteria in each content area printed in **bold type**. These are the key criteria identified specifically for entry level providers and others enrolled in BEST (Bringing Early Success Training to providers). BEST is offered through the twelve Child Care Resource and Referral agencies across Montana. To locate the Resource and Referral agency that serves your area, contact The Early Childhood Project at 1.800.213.6310 or see page 64 (Supplemental Resources).

The Knowledge Base includes nine key content areas that revolve around the core content area of Personal Dispositions with the content area of Cultural and Developmental Diversity embedded in every other area. The inside of the cover provides a visual representation of how Montana's Early Care and Education Knowledge Base is conceptualized.

Content areas delineate the knowledge, skills and dispositions desirable for early care and education practitioners working with children birth through age 8 and their families in a variety of settings (child care centers, preschools, Head Start and Early Head Start programs, family child care and group homes, Pre K-3 public school classrooms, school-age programs, or private programs).

We have made every attempt to link this document with other guidelines for quality early childhood programming, including the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) Accreditation standards, Head Start Performance Standards, Montana's Early Learning Guidelines, and the Environment Rating Scales (see Supplemental Resources).

For information about what children ages 3-5 years old should know, understand, and be able to do in the areas of creative arts, language and literacy, mathematics and numeracy, physical development and health, science, social-emotional development and social studies, see the Montana Early Learning Guidelines. The guidelines also provide examples of how adults can support children's development. In some cases, there may be some overlap between the Montana Early Learning Guidelines and the Montana Early Care and Education Knowledge Base, particularly in the area of curriculum. However, unlike the indicators found in the Knowledge Base, the examples in the Montana Early Learning Guidelines are not intended to inclusively define the knowledge, skills, and dispositions desirable for early childhood practitioners.

Important Assumptions

The Knowledge Base is developed around several assumptions which recognize that:

1. The expertise of the adults who work with children and their families are the keys to quality. This is impacted not only by training but also by developing personal attributes or dispositions. While dispositions are difficult to measure and often subjective, they critically impact the early childhood setting. In addition to reflecting upon their knowledge and skills, practitioners need to examine their own personal characteristics and to understand that these attributes are active, dynamic, always changing, and subject to growth. These dispositions were placed at the core of the Knowledge Base due to their importance and the impact these dispositions have on other content areas.

2. It is also recognized that cultural and developmental diversity impact all other areas of the Knowledge Base. For this reason, cultural and developmental diversity is also placed in the center of the circle with associated criteria being included in many content areas of the Knowledge Base.
3. Many roles and settings exist within the early childhood profession. Regardless of the role or setting, practitioners work with young children who have many similar needs. Therefore, one set of competencies was developed which is not separated by job location (e.g., home child care, public schools) or age of children (e.g., infant, school-age).
4. The Knowledge Base allows for differentiating assessment. It is presumed that with increased experience, training, and responsibility, early childhood practitioners will move toward more advanced knowledge, skills, and dispositions. However, it is also recognized that regardless of education and experience, practitioners will find that their skills, dispositions, and knowledge will vary based upon the criteria being assessed. For this reason, the Knowledge Base does not delineate a specific level of competence for any particular group (e.g., aides, teachers, directors). The Knowledge Base is not intended to assess where any particular individual “should be,” but rather to identify where his/her abilities and skills currently lie and to serve as a comprehensive tool for goal-setting for future professional development.

How to Use the Knowledge Base

One of the primary purposes of the Knowledge Base is to provide a basis for self-assessment and reflection. We learn not only from our experiences but perhaps even more from reflecting upon these experiences. Reflection enables the practitioner to act in an intentional, deliberate, thoughtful manner rather than acting solely based on tradition, impulse, or routines. Reflective practitioners continually reconsider their practices and beliefs in light of the children and families they serve. They also examine their practices in light of professional standards and best practices.

Through reflecting upon each content area and criteria in relationship to their work, practitioners may determine areas of professional competence and areas needing further growth. Practitioners may seek further training and experience in the areas they have identified. Some practitioners may wish to develop an individual training plan which includes specific goals, strategies, and time-lines, thereby engaging in a more systematic way to continue to grow in the profession. By dating each regular self assessment, practitioners could evaluate their achievement of professional growth over time (see Appendix).

Practitioners may also reflect upon how they demonstrate each criteria. For example, in reflecting upon the criteria, “Is able to incorporate the families’ desires/goals for children into the program,” practitioners may ask themselves, “What are the desires and goals that the families I work with have for their children?” “How do I know?” “How do I collect this information?” “In what ways am I addressing these?” “Are there additional ways to do this?” “Why is this criteria important?” Reading the Knowledge Base may act as an induction into early childhood, exposing the early childhood practitioner to the language and standards used by the profession.

The Knowledge Base may also be helpful to supervisors in assisting staff in assessing their skills and knowledge and in planning in-service training to meet these needs. Training sponsors and educational programs may use the Knowledge Base to critique the types of training they are currently offering, to explore gaps, and to design further educational opportunities. Funders may require those applying for grants to describe evidence of the specific Knowledge Base content areas and criteria that will be addressed and how this will be accomplished.

Personal Dispositions

Personal Dispositions are individual characteristics that are important for being responsive and effective in working with young children, families, and community partners. This includes such attributes as the ability to exhibit stable and responsive work habits and the ability to delight in children's development and discoveries.



*Montana Early Care and Education
Career Development*

Personal Dispositions

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate (Intermed)

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Exhibits stable and responsible work habits								
Demonstrates ability to persevere and reflect upon challenging situations								
Distinguishes between adult and child roles, relationships and responsibilities								
Demonstrates ability to use effective verbal and written communication with children and adults								
Adapts to different communication styles and situations								
Practices respectful, caring communication in interpersonal interactions with children and adults								
Articulates own feelings and needs								
Asks for and gives proper support in challenging situations								
Employs an appropriate sense of humor								
Demonstrates imagination and creativity								

Personal Dispositions (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Exhibits the ability to be flexible								
Understands and respects diversities, including socio-economic, cultural, ethnic, gender, sexual/affectional preference, physical, mental, language, religious, and emotional								
Is open to new ideas and continually refines practice as a result								
Works as a part of a team, making personal contributions to collaborative efforts								
Is sensitive to feelings and needs of children, families, and co-workers								
Maximizes strengths of children, families, and co-workers								
Reflects upon own values and beliefs and thinks about how they influence and guide decisions, expectations, and behaviors								
Delights in and is curious about children’s development								
Values children’s play								
Demonstrates a willingness to take risks and learn from mistakes								

Health, Safety, and Nutrition

Health, Safety, and Nutrition includes the establishment of a safe and healthy environment in which children and adults learn and practice healthy behavior related to nutrition and meals, illness and accident prevention, dental hygiene, emergency procedures, and knowledge about child abuse and neglect prevention.



*Montana Early Care and Education
Career Development*

Health, Safety, and Nutrition

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Utilizes developmental levels, capabilities, and limitations of the children to plan and implement developmentally appropriate activities and programs in health, safety, and nutrition								
Health								
Understands the importance of and maintains health records and up-to-date immunizations on the children in care								
Understands and implements healthy sanitation and hygiene methods (hand washing, bleach solution, air space, etc.) to prevent the spreading of childhood infectious diseases								
Understands the mechanisms of how communicable diseases are spread and transmitted (respiratory, fecal-oral, direct, bloodborne contact) and inform families of outbreaks								
Conducts daily health checks and uses primary indicators (such as fever, diarrhea, draining eyes, etc.) to determine if a child should be excluded from care								
Exhibits understanding and knowledge of the importance of education, supervision, and role modeling in the prevention of communicable diseases								
Utilizes policies for exclusion of ill children, administration of medication, and others that provide safeguards for child health and safety (such as hand washing and transportation policies)								

Health, Safety, and Nutrition (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Implements a plan for health policies and records for staff and promotes their good health								
Utilizes appropriate health appraisals, screening, and assessment services and tools, as available, and makes appropriate referrals when indicated								
Assists young children as individually appropriate in developing decision making and interpersonal skills that enable them to make healthy choices								
Safety								
Establishes an environment that is safe and free from potential dangers by identifying hazards, assessing risks, and taking appropriate corrective action								
Is proficient in following emergency plans and implementing CPR and First Aid to infants and older children								
Demonstrates ability to identify and discuss the safety hazards of indoor equipment and toys for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers								
Is proficient and able to identify the methods and means of fire and burn prevention and poison control in the child care setting								

Health, Safety, and Nutrition (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Provides a playground environment and outdoor equipment that is safe and free from risk (safety zones, height of equipment, absorbing surface, no peeling paint, etc.)								
Demonstrates ability to identify water safety hazards in outdoor settings								
Is proficient and able to identify the guidelines for safe transportation and traffic in early childhood situations (authorization slips, safety seats, seat belts, etc.)								
Is proficient in and able to identify signs of abuse (abuse indicators), and can identify how to document and report suspected child abuse and neglect to designated authorities								
Utilizes appropriate measures for caring for an abused or neglected child								
Utilizes a plan to prevent child abuse in the child care setting (probationary period for new employees, education on positive discipline, low child/provider ratio, etc.)								
Nutrition								
Implements the dietary guidelines based on the USDA Food Guide Pyramid, the Recommended Daily Allowances, and other measures that provide guidelines for nutritional well-being								

Health, Safety, and Nutrition (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Understands childhood nutrition in regard to the challenges of malnutrition, undernutrition, and overnutrition								
Exhibits understanding and knowledge of breast feeding, bottle feeding, and the introduction of solids into the infant’s diet (formula, feeding patterns, sanitary practices, cereal, etc.)								
Exhibits understanding and knowledge of the impact of development on the feeding behavior of toddlers (self-feeding, control issues, food jag, juice vs. milk, etc.)								
Exhibits understanding and knowledge of food behaviors of the preschoolers (influence of friends, adults, and the television)								
Exhibits understanding and knowledge of nutritional needs of the school aged child (slow growth, very active, fast food, menu planning, etc.)								
Exhibits knowledge of the guidelines for subsidized food programs available in Montana								
Effectively utilizes healthy and proper menu planning for a child’s well being, taking into account education, role-modeling, culture, and food allergies								
Exhibits knowledge of the need for food sanitation and safe food practices in a group setting (purchasing, storage, handling, cooking, etc.)								

Child Growth and Development

Child Growth and Development reflects knowledge and understanding of developmental stages, processes, theories and their implications for work with young children and families.



*Montana Early Care and Education
Career Development*

Child Growth and Development

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Describes how children develop at different rates and in various ways in order to plan and implement developmentally appropriate activities and programs for all children, including children with disabilities								
Applies theories of child development, both typical and atypical, and utilizes current research in learning situations (physical, cognitive, language, social, emotional and creative development) and in family, cultural and community contexts								
Identifies pre-, peri-, and postnatal factors that affect children's development and learning, such as individual capacities, temperament, child abuse, family, culture and community influences, and disabilities								
Structures experiences based on the needs and interests of individual children								
Utilizes knowledge regarding different types of disabilities and the implications for development and learning due to disabilities								
Understands the physical development and growth of children to create activities and routines that attend to the physical needs of children including movement, rest, play, fine and gross motor development, health, nutrition, and fitness								

Child Growth and Development (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Understands the important role of play in child development and promotes this development by:								
Valuing various kinds of play (solitary, parallel, cooperative, fantasy, etc.) and providing ample opportunities with open-ended materials (water/sand, blocks, puppets)								
Encouraging play as a tool for developing thoughts, concepts, and skills in communicating ideas and feelings								
Understanding that children process experiences in their lives through play								
Communicating the value of play to parents								
Demonstrating skills in teaching children how to gain access to play groupings								
Managing and organizing play so that it remains safe and does not perpetuate divisiveness, prejudicial or other harmful behaviors								
Fostering social skill development through a learning climate and interactions that support children’s growing abilities to become more socio-centric (being able to solve social problems, initiating and sustaining interactions, working collaboratively with others, planning, sharing, taking turns, negotiating differences, exhibiting tolerance and finding non-physical ways to resolve conflicts and make-decisions)								

Child Growth and Development (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Supports children’s emotional development by:								
Establishing relationships with children and families								
Responding to children’s interests and needs								
Respecting children’s needs for personal space								
Selecting materials and activities that are challenging, yet appropriate, and that promote positive images of different races, genders, religions, cultures, traditions, beliefs, and abilities								
Supporting children who live in stressful or violent environments and connecting children and families to appropriate resources when needed								
Understands that young children are at a critical period for the acquisition and development of language skills, and promotes children’s language skills by:								
Supporting dialogue among children and between children and adults								
Modeling a variety of uses and means of oral and written language that teaches children how to organize and express their ideas, make requests, gain information and communicate with others								
Supporting children in developing and maintaining their home language								

Environmental Design

Environmental Design includes knowledge of how to create safe, attractive, inviting, and well-organized learning spaces for young children that promote physical, social-emotional, cognitive, and creative development both indoors and outdoors.



*Montana Early Care and Education
Career Development*

Environmental Design

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Arranges the physical space and materials to create a dynamic, safe, clean, secure, attractive and stimulating environment								
Organizes space into identifiable activity areas which encourage active involvement, initiative, exploration, responsibility, creativity and a growing sense of autonomy								
Plans for and invites dramatic play, block building, small manipulative/table toys, math, science, reading and writing, art, music, and sensory exploration (such as sand and water) and child choice of activities through the arrangement and organization of space								
Uses the outdoor environment and natural settings as an integral part of a child's active and quiet learning								
Adapts the environment to accommodate children's special needs								
Selects and uses materials that are stimulating to each child and suitable to individual learning styles, varying developmental levels, special needs, and language and cultures of the children in the group								
Effectively schedules activities, routines, and predictable transitions and utilizes both auditory and visual prompts								

Environmental Design (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Invites and uses input from children in arranging the environment when developmentally appropriate								
Provides each child with space for personal belongings								
Arranges space to accommodate individual, small, and large group activities								
Understands the link between how space is arranged and organized and its effect on children's behavior (such as clear pathways to reduce disruptions as children move between activities)								
Provides areas for active and quiet activities								
Provides learning materials and equipment that are readily accessible to children, promote positive interaction and are rotated to maintain children's interest								
Encourages children to learn to take care of and respect materials, equipment, living things in the program and the outdoor environment								
Displays children's work attractively at children's eye level and other visual displays, such as posters that promote exposure to diversity of gender and roles, race, ability, and culture								

Child Guidance

Child Guidance includes the ability to identify developmentally appropriate behavior and employ a variety of positive guidance strategies that promote self-regulation, respect for others, and meeting the needs of the group.



*Montana Early Care and Education
Career Development*

Child Guidance

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Demonstrates understanding of the importance of developing a supportive relationship with each child as the foundation for positive child guidance								
Uses knowledge of how young children grow and learn to develop and implements appropriate scheduling, transitions, activities, and play area arrangements that support young children's success								
Understands the significance of a stimulating learning environment in preventing challenging behaviors								
Understands the significance of and reflects upon his/her own behaviors in setting the classroom climate and providing encouragement for appropriate behavior								
Uses knowledge of how young children grow and learn and communicates appropriate individual and group expectations for children								
Utilizes a variety of research-based positive guidance techniques with an emphasis on facilitating children's development of self-regulation and respect for others								
Demonstrates understanding of the multiple, underlying causes of children's challenging behaviors								
Uses effective, individualized strategies to help children re-gain self-control such as problem solving								

Child Guidance (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Uses encouragement more than praise to support children's self-awareness and the development of intrinsic (internal) motivation for appropriate behavior								
Modifies situations in anticipation of problems								
Encourages feelings of empathy and respect for others								
Helps each child to be accepted by the group and nurtures pro-social interactions								
Provides encouraging statements and guidance statements with children one-on-one (in private)								
Intervenes to support a child when necessary which may include classroom rearrangement, addition of materials, schedule adjustments, support during transitions, or providing additional encouragement								
Accepts children's feelings and provides acceptable outlets for children to express them								
Develops an atmosphere of mutual trust, respect, and cooperation which fosters each individual's self-esteem								
Involves children in the establishment of guidelines for acceptable and appropriate behavior when developmentally appropriate								

Child Guidance (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Articulates and defends own beliefs regarding guidance								
Respects diverse values, culture, individual temperament, and learning styles and examines these in relationship to own guidance practices and beliefs								
Uses observation to gather more information to begin problem-solving when working with a child with challenging behaviors								
Maintains regular communication with the child's family and engages parents in the problem-solving process								
With parent consent, provides observation information and classroom descriptions as a member of the child's team to generate goals								
Actively supports implementation of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) or the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) goals in the program to support the child's development								

Family and Community Partnerships

Family and Community Partnerships involves building collaborative relationships with families and community resources to maximize support and services for each child and family.



*Montana Early Care and Education
Career Development*

Family and Community Partnerships

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Establishes frequent contact with families through a variety of communication strategies to build trust, understanding, and mutual respect (using communication in the home language of the child when possible)								
Provides ongoing, relevant information to families about the program, curriculum, child growth, development, and learning								
Is aware of community resources and actively assists families in seeking them								
Is aware of one’s professional role of making referrals when necessary and appropriate (such as when parents request information that requires additional expertise)								
Exhibits an understanding of the impact of special needs on families and children								
Seeks and maintains a collaborative relationship with families, community, and social support systems								
Involves families and community members in contributing to the diversity of the learning environment (sharing cultural experiences, field trips, etc.)								
Respects variations across cultures in terms of family strengths, expectations, values, and child-rearing practices								

Family and Community Partnerships (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Encourages parent advocacy and involvement when a child transitions to and from the program								
Exhibits an understanding of the effects of family stress on the behavior of young children								
Exhibits the ability to incorporate the families' desires/goals for children into the program								
Encourages involvement of families in all aspects of the program								
Articulates the rationale for developmentally appropriate programs for children and the need for community support for such programs								

Program Management

Program Management involves the nuts and bolts of assuring effective program operation while juggling child, parent, and staff needs within the context of the community. This also involves regulations, record keeping, and program improvement.



*Montana Early Care and Education
Career Development*

Program Management

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Uses effective business management techniques:								
Exhibits knowledge of federal and state regulations (such as state child care licensing, Head Start, etc.) regarding children birth through age eight, including children with special needs, and is aware of how they affect early care and education								
Utilizes effective hiring practices to recruit, hire, and retain qualified staff								
Understands the effect of high staff turnover on the program, staff, children, and families, and provides appropriate supervision and training to reduce turnover and provide continuity of care								
Demonstrates ability to balance income and expenses								
Analyzes expenses to maximize profits and efficiency while maintaining a quality program								
Provides timely and accurate documentation for state licensing								
Maintains a program which meets insurance and state and federal regulations								
Organizes, plans, and keeps accurate records through:								
Identifying, reporting, and meeting the needs of abused and/or neglected children								
Using observation and assessment as a basis for planning learning experiences and activities								

Program Management (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Maintaining up-to-date records concerning the growth, health, behavior, and progress of each child in the group								
Sharing information with parents and other appropriate adults								
Implementing procedures for smooth transitions from one group to another								
Uses all available resources to ensure effective operation through:								
Making or obtaining materials and equipment appropriate to the developmental needs of children								
Encouraging children to take ownership in the program, when developmentally appropriate, by providing opportunities for sharing ideas and decision making while continually shaping the program to meet their needs								
Establishing liaisons with community resources and social services to support needs of individual children and families								
Implementing and modifying activities to be responsive to individual children (such as special needs, various ages, highly active, health restricted, in-crisis)								
Orienting new staff, substitutes, and volunteers to routines and to the abilities and special needs of each child								

Program Management (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Practicing cooperation and encouraging team work among staff to promote feelings of support and competence								
Communicating effectively with co-workers								
Participating in on-going program evaluation and program improvement efforts								

Curriculum

Curriculum encompasses developmentally appropriate practice that supports physical, social-emotional, cognitive, and creative development with: a balance of adult and child-directed activities; indoor and outdoor experiences; individual, small, and large group activities; blocks of uninterrupted time for children to engage in self-chosen activities; and meaningful and relevant interaction with a variety of materials, children, and adults.



*Montana Early Care and Education
Career Development*

Curriculum

*For more specific information regarding early childhood curriculum, please see Montana's Early Learning Guidelines, which outline seven curriculum areas in detail. Contact the Montana Early Childhood Services Bureau at 1-866-239-0458.

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

Common Features Across All Content Areas:

Creates a curriculum that assures a secure base for young children to explore and tackle challenging problems								
Includes blocks of uninterrupted time (at least one hour) for children to persist at self-chosen activities both indoors and out								
Balances individual, small, and large group activities, allowing a balance of self-directed and guided learning								
Utilizes a thematic curriculum and a project approach based upon children's emerging interests								
Emphasizes developmentally appropriate methods that include play, open-ended questioning, group discussions, problem solving, cooperative learning and inquiry experiences								
Provides experiences and activities and interacts with children in ways that allow children to construct their own knowledge								
Uses knowledge about individual children's interests, abilities, and goals to plan appropriate learning experiences for each child								
Adapts curriculum content to meet the needs of all young children, including development of Individualized Education Plans (IEP) for children with developmental delays								

Curriculum (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Provides and uses materials and experiences in all areas of the curriculum reflective of the child's culture and the community								
Demonstrates knowledge of children's developmental continuum of learning								
Demonstrates understanding of how multiple ways of knowing are accommodated across curriculum areas								
Demonstrates knowledge of how children's learning is influenced by culture, disability, ability, motivation, social and emotional factors, socioeconomic status, adult support, and environment								
Demonstrates awareness of common resources specific to each curriculum area and knows how and when to use these resources								
Provides both planned and spontaneous experiences that are developmentally appropriate, meaningful and challenging for young children, including those with developmental delays or disabilities								
Provides experiences that help children become better able to manage or regulate their expression of emotions, and over time, to cope with frustration and manage impulses effectively								

Curriculum (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Language and Literacy								
Provides a variety of developmentally appropriate activities and experiences that support literacy daily using print and non-print resources								
Reads to children daily								
Maintains a permanent reading and writing center, accessible to children throughout the day								
Items in the environment are labeled clearly								
Provides opportunities to explore writing in a variety of ways, including drawing, copying, invented spelling, using word banks, and creating books, experience charts, writing in journals, and recording dictated stories								
Encourages children to use language, reading, and writing to strengthen their own cultural identity								
Encourages children to identify letters and words throughout their environment								
Provides and uses a wide variety of props and activities such as tape recorders, telephones, and microphones								
Encourages oral language through fingerplays, storytelling, felt boards, textless books, and poetry								

Curriculum (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Encourages children to use language to express thoughts and feelings								
Expands and extends children’s language by asking open-ended questions, exposing children to rich vocabulary and language								
Models effective listening								
Uses a range of strategies to derive meaning from stories and texts								
Uses language, reading, and writing for a variety of purposes								
Develops basic concepts of print and understanding of sounds, letters, and letter-sound relationships								
Science								
Questions children about objects and events and poses open-ended questions (such as What do you think will happen if...?)								
Encourages children to actively explore materials, objects, and events								
Encourages children to make careful observations of objects, organisms, and events using all of their senses								
Encourages children to describe, compare, sort, classify, and order in terms of observable characteristics and properties								

Curriculum (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Provides children with a variety of simple tools to extend their observations (such as a hand lens, measuring tools, eye droppers, balance scales, pulleys and ropes, incline planes, magnifying glasses, magnets)								
Introduces children to scientific concepts such as motion systems, absorption, diffusion, gravity, evaporation, density, friction, leverage, static electricity, etc.								
Engages children in simple investigations, including making predictions, gathering and interpreting data, recognizing simple patterns, and drawing conclusions								
Provides opportunities for children to record observations, explanations, and ideas through multiple forms of representation								
Provides opportunities for children to work collaboratively with others, share and discuss ideas, and listen to new perspectives								
Provides opportunities for children to explore nature, plants, rocks, animals, weather, and related concepts such as life cycles, organisms, habitat, and the interdependence of resources for all living things								
Provides daily access to science and discovery centers based upon children’s interests, that are added to over time, and changed when children’s interest changes								

Curriculum (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

Mathematics

Numeracy - Provides developmentally appropriate activities and experiences to promote numeracy concepts by:

Using board games and manipulatives to learn math concepts (such as counting and planning ahead)								
Counting real things to help the child use personal experiences with objects to better understand numbers								
Practicing counting as opportunities naturally arise (setting the table, counting children at circle time, etc.)								
Using objects with naturally occurring numbers and number words such as clocks, calendars, thermometers, computers, calculators, measuring cups, etc.								
Using number words and numerals, including zero, in meaningful everyday activities								
Pointing out counting to let the child know how many things are in a group								
Using a variety of strategies (such as questions, comments, counting) to prompt children to think about quantity and number words								
Talking to the child about a variety of uses of numerals (such as street address and phone number)								

Curriculum (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Encouraging the child to guess or estimate the amount or size of something								
Providing opportunities for the child to count and share (such as snack, object, or toy)								
Counting - Provides developmentally appropriate activities and experiences to promote counting by:								
Asking a child to pass out utensils, a napkin, and a cup for each child								
Providing a variety of objects that work together in a 1:1 relationship (such as containers and lids)								
Engaging in conversations with the child about quantity and comparisons as the child interacts with materials								
Providing a variety of materials that may be used for adding and taking away								
Posing questions that ask the child to make guesses or predictions								
Providing planned opportunities for the child to predict in naturally occurring activities								
Providing opportunities for the child to form numerals with many different mediums (such as with play dough, clay, or sand)								
Providing opportunities for the child to write numerals with different materials								

Curriculum (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Patterns and Relationships - Provides developmentally appropriate activities and experiences to promote patterns and relationships by:								
Supplying a variety of materials for sorting, classifying, and grouping, and encouraging the child to explain the reasoning behind their decisions								
Encouraging the child to create, identify, match, and describe patterns in objects, designs, pictures, movement activities, and recurring events								
Helping the child create and recognize patterns in the environment								
Providing opportunities for the child to create own patterns and to explain the reasoning behind the decisions								
Helping the child recognize and describe sequences in nature, daily routines, and in stories								
Assisting the child in identifying shapes in the environment								
Measurement Relationships - Provides developmentally appropriate activities and experiences to promote measurement relationships by:								
Providing a variety of measuring tools and time-related events (such as rulers, measuring tapes, measuring cups, scales, etc.)								
Including charts and posters with measurement language (such as growth charts, a picture graph that displays how many children can be in an area, etc.)								

Curriculum (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Providing opportunities for the child to experiment with measuring and talking about measurement concepts everyday								
Introducing general concepts of time (such as yesterday, today, tomorrow, before, and after)								
Talking about time and sequence during daily activities (such as wake-up, eat breakfast, brush teeth, and get dressed)								
Geometry - Provides developmentally appropriate activities and experiences to promote geometry by:								
Encouraging the child to explore materials, nature, and the environment (two- and three- dimensional objects)								
Enabling the child to experience a wide variety of gross motor movements in open spaces both indoors and outdoors								
Providing materials in a variety of shapes and sizes to create and represent shapes (such as paper, pipe cleaners, play dough, scissors, tape, and wood)								
Providing a variety of geometric materials to explore (unit blocks, colored and patterned shape blocks, stencils, objects and materials in nature such as rocks, bubbles, and snowflakes)								
Using and encouraging the child to use language and physical gestures to demonstrate directional words with people and things in the environment (such as beside, inside, behind, above, below, here, there, in, out, over, under, next to, near, and far)								

Curriculum (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Naming and calling attention to shapes naturally apparent in the environment (such as spider webs, leaves, rainbows, wheels on a car, etc.)								
Providing space and hands-on materials for creating landscapes (such as train tracks, houses, roadways, etc.)								
Problem Solving - Provides developmentally appropriate activities and experiences to promote problem solving by:								
Providing displays of interesting collections for children (such as butterflies, pine cones, rocks, sea shells, etc.)								
Providing opportunities to discuss the characteristics of a collection using appropriate language (such as “they all belong in the ocean,” “they all have wings”)								
Representing data using symbols, graphs, and charts								
Using graphs and charts to organize and interpret information and to show relationships								
Encouraging children to experiment with many different ways to solve problems								
Providing computational tools where they would naturally be used (calculator near writing, adding machine near an office)								

Curriculum (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Modeling correct language when talking with a child about quantity (such as part, pieces, whole, half, and quarter)								
Providing a variety of shapes and materials that may be broken into parts and brought back together (such as pizza, crackers, unit blocks, puzzles, and play dough)								

The Arts: Art, Drama, Music, Dance and Creative Movement

Provides developmentally appropriate activities and experiences that promote the arts by:

Allowing children to participate in both two and three dimensional art activities such as drawing, printing, sculpture, painting, modeling, weaving, puppetry, and collage								
Providing children with a variety of art media								
Exposing children to aesthetic criteria including line, color, shape, volume or mass, design, pattern, space, balance, and texture								
Encouraging child-directed versus teacher-directed projects								
Encouraging art projects that develop over time								
Establishing an art center								
Exposing children to works of art and appreciation of art work								

Curriculum (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Provides developmentally appropriate activities and experiences that promote drama and role playing by:								
Establishing a changing, relevant dramatic play area								
Encouraging child-initiated plays								
Including rich stimuli for dramatic play through literature, field trips, and real life experiences								
Encouraging close observation of various roles								
Extending play through questioning, verbal affirmations, suggestions (such as additional props or situations, switching roles, observations of those in different roles, discussions about roles, etc.)								
Allowing ample time for creative play								
Modeling and engaging children in finger plays, flannel board stories, other storytelling, and puppetry								
Helping children establish a sense of play by the use of props								
Encouraging children to develop their own props and scenarios								
Provides developmentally appropriate activities and experiences that promote music by:								
Developing a music center								

Curriculum (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Exposing children to a variety of musical genres (folk, classical, ethnic, pop, etc.)								
Exposing children to a variety of musical instruments								
Modeling the use of musical terminology and musical notation								
Providing music experiences on a daily basis								
Allowing children to create instruments								
Allowing children to sing a variety of simple songs in various keys, meters, and genres (folk songs, ethnic songs, singing games, etc.)								
Allowing children to play simple rhythms, melodies, and accompaniments on instruments								
Encouraging children to improvise songs and instrumental accompaniments to songs, stories, and poems								
Supporting children in creating short pieces of music using voices, instruments, and other sound sources								
Encouraging children to invent and use original symbols to represent vocal and instrumental sounds								
Encouraging children to identify the source of a wide variety of sounds								

Curriculum (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Allowing children to respond through movement to music of various tempos, meters, dynamics, modes, genres, and styles								
Encouraging children to use own and standard music vocabulary to describe voices, instruments, music notation, and music of various genres, styles, and periods from diverse cultures								
Promoting children’s awareness of the elements of music								
Provides developmentally appropriate movement and dance activities and experiences by:								
Modeling the joy of kinesthetic movement (such as dancing, hopping, jumping, leaping, etc.)								
Establishing a movement area with props and space that encourages movement (such as scarves, ribbons, balls, music, and mirrors)								
Including movement vocabulary during movement activities (such as high/low, slow/fast, and smooth/bumpy)								
Implementing daily opportunities to participate in both teacher initiated and child initiated activities								
Including rich stimuli for movement including recorded music, props, observations, modeling, and discussions								
Observing and discussing the physical world, people, animals, plants, and machines to understand the how and why of movement								

Curriculum (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Social Studies								
Provides a pro-social environment in which each child may develop self-awareness, interpersonal relationship skills, and self-esteem								
Integrates concepts of family, community , and culture into all areas of the program to optimally support each child’s growing sense of self								
Helps children learn about the role of work in our society and types of jobs in the community								
Helps children learn concepts of personal and group responsibility by caring for each other and the indoor and outdoor environments								
Models, encourages, and teaches skills that assist children in working cooperatively with others								
Models, encourages, and teaches respect for others including those who differ in gender, ethnicity, ability and/or ideas								
Plans experiences and activities that assist children in recognizing similarities between cultures								
Plans experiences and activities that allow children to understand “What is the place that I live in like?”								
Plans experiences and activities that allow children to experience a sense of locations (such as directions and maps)								

Curriculum (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Plans experiences and activities that allow children to experience how people, things, and ideas move from one place to another								
Assists children in differentiating between wants and needs								
Physical Development and Health Enhancement								
Respects children’s and families’ preferences regarding dress for physical activity and level of participation								
Makes adaptations to help children meet physical goals yet support culturally sensitive practices								
Provides developmentally appropriate gross motor activities and experiences in the following areas:								
Physical fitness								
Climbing and balance								
Walking, running, jumping, galloping, hopping, skipping								
Throwing, catching, carrying, kicking and striking								
Plans outdoor play experiences that expose children to a variety of gross motor equipment such as tricycles, parachutes, balls, bean bags, climbing equipment, obstacle courses, etc.								

Curriculum (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Provides developmentally appropriate fine motor activities and experiences in the following areas:								
Developing eye-hand coordination								
Using small muscles to complete tasks and for self-help skills (such as zipping, buttoning, putting on socks, putting on shoes, and learning to tie)								
Using drawing and writing tools								

Observation and Assessment

Observation and Assessment includes understanding the how and why of observing children and the utilization of informal, authentic, and formal assessment techniques as a tool for curriculum planning, goal setting for individuals in partnerships with parents, and preparation of the learning environment to enhance growth and learning.



*Montana Early Care and Education
Career Development*

Observation and Assessment

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Uses observation on a regular basis to document children’s growth and development including; social/emotional, physical, cognitive, language, and creative								
Effectively utilizes an array of assessment tools and a variety of processes in natural settings, including but not limited to, systematic collections of representative work by children (artwork, dictated or written stories, writing samples, art works, photographs, recordings, etc.), records of observations by teacher/caregivers, records of conversations and interviews with children, and teacher summaries of children’s progress as individuals and as groups								
Maintains appropriate records of children’s development and behavior that do not compromise children’s psychological safety or feelings of self-esteem								
Interprets and uses assessment information for curriculum planning, designing the environment, and individualizing goals for children with parents								
Involves the family and, as appropriate, multi-disciplinary team members in assessing the child’s development, behavior, strengths, needs, and goal setting for the child								
Discusses assessment results with families in a clear, supportive way on a regular basis, understanding families are partners in a child’s growth and development								

Observation and Assessment (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Exhibits understanding and knowledge of cultural and language influences, other environmental factors, and varying learning styles on assessment practices and results								
Displays and understands knowledge that developmental screening tests are the first step in an evaluation and intervention process intended to help children achieve their maximum potential								
Utilizes assessment as a strategy to understand areas of strength and areas needing adult assistance because this shows the direction of their growth								
Utilizes authentic assessment to document children’s development in the context of reliable, established developmentally appropriate criteria								

Professionalism

Professionalism includes making a commitment to the early childhood profession by advocating for quality programs and services while adhering to the professional code of ethics and keeping current in the field of early childhood education and child development.



*Montana Early Care and Education
Career Development*

Professionalism

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Displays professional work habits, including dependability, time management, independence, teamwork, and responsibility								
Is aware of dispositions early childhood educators should possess, and works toward strengthening these through self-evaluation and an individualized professional development plan								
Exhibits a commitment to the professional by advocating for quality programs and services for children and families								
Articulates and defends a personal philosophy of early care and education that includes active learning, developmentally appropriate practice and assessment strategies, and inclusionary practices								
Supports linguistic, cultural, and developmental diversity through actions and attitudes								
Demonstrates knowledge of other disciplines which provide related services for young children and their families								
Demonstrates knowledge and ability to access and work with multiple resources to meet developmental needs of young children and their families, collaborating when necessary								
Continually reflects upon practices and makes changes as a result								

Professionalism (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Uses self-assessment techniques, both formal and informal, as part of ongoing individual self-evaluation								
Develops and implements a plan with measurable goals and objectives for continued career growth and development based upon self-assessment								
Maintains information regarding children and families in a confidential manner								
Demonstrates expertise and knowledge of federal and state regulations (licensing information) regarding children and including children with special needs								
Demonstrates an understanding of controversies and issues active in the field of early childhood education including salary, status, and burnout, reflecting upon these controversies and advocating for change and improvement								
Is aware of situations that may present a conflict of interest, collaborating with colleagues, families, and other professionals to take necessary action to prevent this								
Engages in current early childhood legislative issues and advocacy efforts								

Professionalism (cont'd)

Assessment Key/Rate Yourself:

Novice

1. Not yet aware
2. Developing an understanding
3. Beginning to apply

Intermediate

4. Frequently applies
5. Consistently applies

Master

6. Thorough knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate, and synthesize
7. Fosters growth, exercises leadership, and advocates

Criteria	Assessment							Comments
	Novice			Intermed		Master		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Keeps current in the early childhood field by participating in local and national early childhood organizations, attending workshops or classes, continuing training and education, and reading professional materials								
Adheres to and articulates the use of the professional Code of Ethics (see NAEYC Code of Ethics on next page)								

Code of Ethical Conduct

Excerpted from NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct, 1998. For a complete copy, contact NAEYC at 1-800-424-2460 or www.naeyc.org.

Section I: Ethical responsibilities to children

Childhood is a unique and valuable stage in the life cycle. Our paramount responsibility is to provide safe, healthy, nurturing, and responsive settings for children. We are committed to supporting children's development, respect individual differences, help children learn to live and work cooperatively, and promote their self-esteem, health, self-awareness, competence, self-worth, and resiliency.

Ideals

- To be familiar with the knowledge base of early childhood education and to keep current through continuing education and in-service training.
- To base program practices upon current knowledge in the field of child development and related disciplines and upon particular knowledge of each child.
- To recognize and respect the uniqueness and the potential of each child.
- To appreciate the special vulnerability of children.
- To create and maintain safe and healthy settings that foster children's social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development and that respects their dignity and their contributions.
- To support the right of each child to play and learn in inclusive early childhood programs to the fullest extent consistent with the best interests of all involved. As with adults who are disabled in the larger community, children with disabilities are ideally served in the same settings in which they would participate if they did not have a disability.
- To ensure that children with disabilities have access to appropriate and convenient support services and to advocate for the resources necessary to provide the most appropriate settings for all children.

Section II: Ethical responsibilities to families

Families are of primary importance in children's development. (The term family may include others, besides parents, who are responsibly involved with the child.) Because the family and the early childhood practitioner have a common interest in the child's welfare, we acknowledge a primary responsibility to bring about collaboration between the home and school in ways that enhance the child's development.

Ideals

- To develop relationships of mutual trust with families we serve.
- To acknowledge and build upon strengths and competencies as we support families in their task of nurturing children.
- To respect the dignity of each family and its culture, language, customs, and beliefs.
- To respect families' child rearing values and their right to make decisions for their children.
- To interpret each child's progress to parents within the framework of a developmental perspective and to help families understand and appreciate the value of developmentally appropriate early childhood practices.
- To help family members improve their understanding of their children and to enhance their skills as parents.
- To participate in building support networks for families by providing them with opportunities to interact with program staff, other families, community resources, and professional services.

Section III: Ethical responsibilities to colleagues

In a caring, cooperative work place human dignity is respected, professional satisfaction is promoted, and positive relationships are modeled. Based upon our core values, our primary responsibility in this arena is to establish and maintain settings and relationships that support productive work and meet professional needs. The same ideals that apply to children are inherent in our responsibilities to adults.

A. Responsibilities to co-workers**Ideals**

- To establish and maintain relationships of respect, trust, and cooperation with co-workers.
- To share resources and information with co-workers.
- To support co-workers in meeting their professional needs and in their professional development.
- To accord co-workers due recognition of professional achievement.

B. Responsibilities to employers**Ideals**

- To assist the program in providing the highest quality of service.
- To do nothing that diminishes the reputation of the program in which we work unless it is violating laws and regulations designed to protect children or the provisions of this Code.

C. Responsibilities to employees

Ideals

- To promote policies and working conditions that foster mutual respect, competence, well-being, and positive self-esteem in staff members.
- To create a climate of trust and candor that will enable staff to speak and act in the best interests of children, families, and the field of early childhood care and education.
- To strive to secure an equitable compensation (salary and benefits) for those who work with or on behalf of young children.

Section IV: Ethical responsibilities to community and society

Early childhood programs operate within a context of an immediate community made up of families and other institutions concerned with children's welfare. Our responsibilities to the community are to provide programs that meet its needs, cooperate with agencies and professions that share responsibility for children, and to develop needed programs that are not currently available. Because the larger society has a measure of responsibility for the welfare and protection of children, and because of our specialized expertise in child development, we acknowledge an obligation to serve as a voice for children everywhere.

Ideals

- To provide the community with high-quality (age and individually appropriate, and culturally and socially sensitive) education/care programs and services.
- To promote cooperation among agencies and interdisciplinary collaboration among professions concerned with the welfare of young children, their families, and their teachers.
- To work, through education, research, and advocacy, toward an environmentally safe world in which all children receive adequate health care, food, and shelter, are nurtured, and live free from violence.
- To work, through education, research, and advocacy, toward a society in which all young children have access to high-quality education/care programs.
- To promote knowledge and understanding of young children and their needs. To work toward greater social acknowledgment of children's rights and greater social acceptance of responsibility for their well-being.
- To support policies and laws that promote the well-being of children and families, and to oppose those that impair their well-being. To participate in developing policies and laws that are needed, and to cooperate with other individuals and groups in these efforts.
- To further the professional development of the field of early childhood care and education and to strengthen its commitment to realizing its core values as reflected in this Code.

Individualized Early Childhood Professional Development Plan

Name: _____

Date(s): _____

After you have completed the Montana Early Child Care and Education Knowledge Base as a self-assessment, you may utilize this plan to formulate specific goals. Reflect upon your work with young children and families and consider what you want to learn more about, what you want to understand more thoroughly, and what skills you want to improve. You might refer to specific criteria from your self-assessment in each Knowledge Base content area.

Personal Dispositions			
	Strategy (How will I accomplish this?)	Resources I Need (What and who may be of help to me?)	Completion Date
Goal 1:			
Goal 2:			
Goal 3:			
Cultural Diversity			
Goal 1:			
Goal 2:			
Goal 3:			

Individualized Early Childhood Professional Development Plan

Developmental Diversity			
	Strategy (How will I accomplish this?)	Resources I Need (What and who may be of help to me?)	Completion Date
Goal 1:			
Goal 2:			
Goal 3:			
Health, Safety, and Nutrition			
Goal 1:			
Goal 2:			
Goal 3:			

Individualized Early Childhood Professional Development Plan

Child Growth and Development			
	Strategy (How will I accomplish this?)	Resources I Need (What and who may be of help to me?)	Completion Date
Goal 1:			
Goal 2:			
Goal 3:			
Environmental Design			
Goal 1:			
Goal 2:			
Goal 3:			

Individualized Early Childhood Professional Development Plan

Child Guidance			
	Strategy (How will I accomplish this?)	Resources I Need (What and who may be of help to me?)	Completion Date
Goal 1:			
Goal 2:			
Goal 3:			
Family and Community Partnerships			
Goal 1:			
Goal 2:			
Goal 3:			

Individualized Early Childhood Professional Development Plan

Program Management			
	Strategy (How will I accomplish this?)	Resources I Need (What and who may be of help to me?)	Completion Date
Goal 1:			
Goal 2:			
Goal 3:			
Curriculum			
Goal 1:			
Goal 2:			
Goal 3:			

Individualized Early Childhood Professional Development Plan

Observation and Assessment			
	Strategy (How will I accomplish this?)	Resources I Need (What and who may be of help to me?)	Completion Date
Goal 1:			
Goal 2:			
Goal 3:			
Professionalism			
Goal 1:			
Goal 2:			
Goal 3:			

Supplemental Resources

There are literally thousands of resources available to help you learn more or update your knowledge in any of the content areas of the Montana Knowledge Base. We have identified some publishers and organizations that provide professionals with high quality resources. Remember to evaluate carefully information you obtain from web sites. The following sources may be helpful as you search for further reading and resources. This is not an all inclusive listing.

We urge you to contact the Early Childhood Specialist/Trainer at your area Child Care Resource and Referral Agency for specific resource recommendations from their Resource Libraries or the Montana Early Childhood Project at 1-800-213-6310.

Montana Resources

Early Childhood Project

www.montana.edu/ecp

The ECP is dedicated to improving and enhancing the quality and availability of services to young children and families. The Montana Early Learning Guidelines are available at our website.

Child Care plus+: The Center on Inclusion in Early Childhood

www.ccplus.org

This organization's mission is to share knowledge, foster skills, and encourage attitudes that promote inclusion as a core component of excellence in early childhood.

Montana Child Care Resource and Referral Network

www.montanachildcare.com

The MCCR&R Network provides statewide leadership in shaping collaborations strengthening local resource and referral agencies for the purpose of collectively building a diverse, high quality early care and education system accessible to all Montana families.

Montana Head Start Association

www.headstartmt.org

The MHSA brings together families, staff, directors, and friends of all Head Start and Early Head Start to provide leadership, education, information, and advocacy on behalf of young children, pregnant women, and families throughout Montana.

Parents, Let's Unite for Kids

www.pluk.org

PLUK is a private, nonprofit organization formed in 1984 by parents of children with disabilities and chronic illnesses in the state of Montana for the purpose of information, support, training and assistance to aid their children at home, school and as adults.

National Resources

American Academy of Pediatrics

www.aap.org

The AAP is an organization of 60,000 pediatricians committed to the attainment of optimal physical, mental, and social health and well-being for all infants, children, adolescents and young adults.

Child Care plus+: The Center on Inclusion in Early Childhood

www.ccplus.org

This organization facilitates training throughout the United States as part of their mission stated above .

Children's Defense Fund

www.childrensdefense.org

The mission of the CDF is to ensure every child a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start, and a Moral Start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.

Clearinghouse on Early Education and Parenting

ceep.crc.uiuc.edu

The CEEP provides publications and information to the worldwide early childhood and parenting communities.

Supplemental Resources (continued)

National Resources (continued)

Early Childhood Resources Catalog 1-800-424-2460

www.naeyc.org

This catalog is full of reasonably priced professional resources published by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The website has a wealth of current information effecting the early childhood profession. Accreditation information is available at their website.

Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute

www.fpg.unc.edu/~ecers/

This website has Environmental Rating Scales for Early Childhood, Infant/Toddler, Family Day Care, and School Age Care.

Head Start Bureau National Website

www2.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/hsb

Head Start serves the child development needs of preschool (birth through age five) and their low-income families.

High Scope Educational Research Foundation

www.highscope.org

High Scope has been developing research and curriculum in early childhood education for decades. They have an online store.

National Association for Family Child Care

www.nafcc.org

NAFCC administers the accreditation program for family and group child care.

National Child Care Information Center

www.nccic.org

NCCIC, a service of the Child Care Bureau, is a national clearinghouse and technical assistance center that links parents, providers, policy-makers, researchers, and the public to early care and education information.

The National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center

www.nectas.unc.edu

The NECTAC's mission is to strengthen service systems to ensure that children with disabilities (birth through five) and their families receive and benefit from high quality, culturally appropriate, and family-centered supports and services.

National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care

nrc.uchsc.edu

NRCHSCC is a resource for providers and parents that provides health and safety information for child care.

Public Broadcasting Service Teacher Source

www.pbs.org/teachersource

The PBS Teacher Source website has information on activities and lesson plans for children.

The Program for Infant/Toddler Caregivers

www.pitc.org

The Program for Infant/Toddler Caregivers seeks to ensure that America's infants get a safe, healthy, emotionally secure, and intellectually rich start in life.

The Project Approach

www.project-approach.com/default.htm

The Project Approach provides readers with resources to enable them to carry out projects wherever they may work with children.

Red Leaf Press

www.redleafpress.org

This publisher has a comprehensive catalog of early childhood specific resources.

Teaching Strategies, Inc.

www.teachingstrategies.com

This organization publishes The Creative Curriculum and other materials.

Zero to Three: National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families

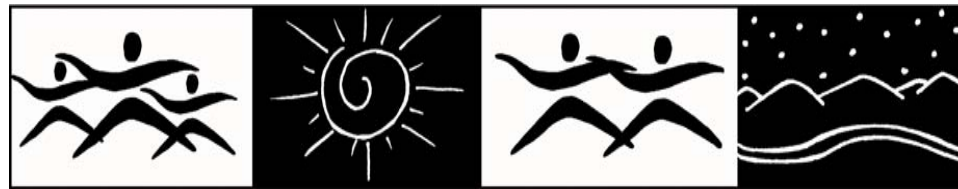
www.zerotothree.org

One of the nation's leading resources on the first three years of life.

Acknowledgments

This major revision of the Montana Early Care and Education Knowledge Base was completed with input from many individuals who have thoughtfully given their feedback and time by contributing to this document. The early childhood profession is dynamic and involves a growing body of research-based knowledge that is reflected here. Sincere and heartfelt thanks to all of the organizations and people who played a role in this revision.

- Montana Early Childhood Higher Education Consortium—Dr. Julie Bullard, University of Montana- Western and Dr. Janis Bullock, Montana State University, Co-Chairs
- Montana Early Care and Education Career Development Advisory Board
- Montana Child Care Resource and Referral Network Trainers
- Andrea Genser and The Center for Career Development in Early Care and Education, Wheelock College, Boston, MA
- NAEYC Position Statement: A Conceptual Framework for Early Childhood Professional Development
- Child Development Associate (CDA) Assessment Observation Instrument
- NAEYC and NAFCC Accreditation Standards
- Georgia Early Care and Education Competency Goals and Indicators
- New Mexico Competencies for Early Childhood Education
- Washington State Child Care Coordinating Committee, Early Childhood Career Development Core Competencies
- Early care and education practitioners who attended the 2003 Early Childhood Conference in Billings, Montana and many other dedicated teachers and caregivers who have given valuable feedback.
- Montana Early Childhood Project staff - past and present - who willingly contended with a multitude of edits and subsequent drafts.



Montana Early Childhood Project

Montana State University

P.O. Box 173540

Bozeman, MT 59717-3540

Telephone (406) 994-4746

Toll Free (800) 213-6310

Fax (406) 994-7555

<http://www.montana.edu/ecp>

A mind stretched by new ideas never returns to its original dimensions.

—Oliver Wendell Holmes

HCS/CC-101